

What to WATCH

Sony Six
New Zealand v India
Third ODI
Live from 7:00am
STAR Sports 4
Australian Open
Women's Singles Final
Live from 2:00pm

FA Cup
AFC Bournemouth v Liverpool
Live from 6:45pm
Stevenage Borough v Everton
Live from 11:30pm
Primera Liga
Real Madrid v Granada
Live from 9:00pm

Serie A
Lazio v Juventus
Live from 1:45am (Sunday)
STAR Sports HD1
Serie A
Napoli v Chievo Verona
Live from 11:00pm
Primera Liga

Valencia v Espanyol
Live from 1:00am (Sunday)
Sevilla v Levante
Live from 3:00am (Sunday)
NEO Prime
Bundesliga
Borussia Dortmund v Augsburg
Live from 9:00pm

Wolfsburg v VfB Stuttgart
Live from 12:30am (Sunday)

Nadal thrashes Federer

AFP, Melbourne

Rafael Nadal extended his mastery over long-time rival Roger Federer as he stormed into an Australian Open final against Stanislas Wawrinka in straight sets on Friday.

Spanish top seed Nadal defeated the 17-time Grand Slam champion 7-6 (7/4), 6-3, 6-3 in a dominant semifinal win lasting two hours and 24 minutes on Rod Laver Arena.

Federer was confident of a better showing after failing to beat Nadal in Grand Slams since the 2007 Wimbledon final, but the world number one was relentless in taking apart the much-decorated Swiss.

In 33 meetings in their great, if one-sided, rivalry, Nadal now leads Federer 23-10 and has won their last six matches in Slams as well as their last five meetings on all stages.

MATCH STATS

Rafael Nadal (ESP x1) bt Roger Federer (SUI x6)
 7-6 (7/4), 6-3, 6-3
 Time: 2hr 24min

Nadal		Federer
3	Aces	8
1	Double Faults	1
28	Winners	34
25	Unforced Errors	50
4/14	Break Point Conversions	1/2
105	Total Points Won	86

Nadal, the 2009 champion, will line up in his third Australian final against Wawrinka and he has yet to lose to the Swiss eighth seed in 12 matches.

"We played some really tough rallies at the end of the first set and I resisted really well because Roger was trying to play very aggressive and taking the ball very early," Nadal said.

With the loss, Federer also ceded the mantle of Switzerland's number one player, an honour he has held since

2001, to Wawrinka.

Nadal, seemingly untroubled by a large blister on his serving hand, progressively got stronger during the semi-final and broke Federer's serve four times and lost his only once.

Nadal hit 28 winners to 25 unforced errors, while under-pressure Federer made 50 unforced errors and won just 23 of 42 points he contested at the net.

It will be the Spaniard's 19th Grand Slam final on Sunday and he will be bidding for his 14th major title to tie American Pete Sampras in joint second place behind Federer on the all-time list.

Federer fought off break points in two service games before taking the opening set to a tiebreaker, but volleying errors cost the Swiss and Nadal cruised to the first set with two set points.

The gap widened in the second set with Nadal ruthless in his groundstrokes and putting Federer under pressure to hold serve in the fourth game, before breaking him with a forehand winner in his next service game.



World number one Rafael Nadal of Spain pumps his fist after winning his men's singles semifinal against Roger Federer of Switzerland at the Australian Open in Melbourne yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Barcelona president steps down

AFP, Madrid

Barcelona president Sandro Rosell brought to an end his three-and-a-half year spell in charge of the club by announcing his resignation on Thursday.

Pressure had mounted on Rosell, 49, after a Spanish judge agreed on Wednesday to hear a case made against him by one of the club's own members for alleged misappropriation of funds in the deal which brought Brazilian star Neymar to the club last year.

Sporting vice-president Josep Maria Bartomeu will replace Rosell as president for the remainder of the board's mandate, which runs until 2016.

ASIAN GAMES QUALIFIERS

Bangladesh placed in Group A

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh have been placed along with Hong Kong, Singapore, Thailand and Afghanistan in Group A of the Asian Games Qualifiers, which will take place in Bangladesh from March 13 to 23.

Group B features Oman, Sri Lanka, Chinese Taipei, Qatar and Iran. A total of six teams will qualify for the Asian Games to be held in South Korea, Incheon in September-October 2014, informed a Bangladesh Hockey Federation official yesterday.

Li wary of Dominika



Li Na



Dominika Cibulkova

AFP, Melbourne



Li Na has bitter experience of losing Australian Open finals and she is fired up to go one better against

Dominika Cibulkova on Saturday -- but the Chinese trailblazer is taking nothing for granted.

While the world number four is the clear favourite to win a second Grand Slam crown against the Slovak, courtesy of being 20 places higher in the rankings, she knows anything can happen on the day.

"It is the third time, so pretty close to the trophy," Li said, having made the final twice before, in 2011 and 2013, and lost after leading each time.

"I've got more experience. The final is final, but it's still just one match," she added.

"At least me and Dominika, it's 50/50. Everyone has a chance to win the title. You come to the court, just play, don't think too much."

Li was a set up before losing to Kim Clijsters in 2011, and last year she was also ahead against Victoria Azarenka but rolled her ankle twice, banging her head hard on the court the second time.

In Cibulkova, nicknamed the "pocket rocket", she comes up against a player who has used her power off the ground and relentless running to scurry through the

draw, dropping just one set.

En route she has accounted for the third, fifth, and 11th seeds in Maria Sharapova, Agnieszka Radwanska and Simona Halep. In contrast, Li has had a relatively easy run, meeting two qualifiers and no one seeded better than 22.

"I think she has pretty fast legs on the court, she's also a hitter," Li of the Slovak, who combines bundles of energy with sumptuous groundstrokes.

"We play pretty similar so it will be a tough match, another challenge."

Li, 31, takes far more experience into the

HEAD-TO-HEAD

Li Na (CHN x4) v Dominika Cibulkova (SVK x20)

Li leads 4-0

match, having made the Melbourne Park final in three of the past four years, while Cibulkova, 24, is in her first Grand Slam decider.

The Chinese star is also a crowd favourite due to her dogged tennis and impish humour. She rose to stardom by winning the 2011 French Open, becoming Asia's first Grand Slam singles champion.

Twentieth seed Cibulkova is also aiming to write her name in the history books as the first Slovak Grand Slam singles winner, and said for her it was about having belief that she can go all the way.

AFP, Perth



It took them almost three months, but England finally notched their first win of their horrific Australian tour in the fourth one-day international against Australia at the WACA Ground on Friday.

After eight successive losses to the home nation in both Tests and one-dayers, the tourists finally had something to celebrate with a 57-run win over Australia, which already held an unbeatable 3-0 lead in the five-match ODI series.

Up against an understrength Australian side led by George Bailey rather than Michael Clarke, who was rested along with Brad Haddin and

David Warner, England made 316 for eight after being sent in to bat on a great batting wicket.

In reply Australia made 259 from 47.4 overs.

Even in victory there was late agony for the English, with two chances going begging in the 10th-wicket stand and they also failed to refer a catch behind that Hot Spot revealed had caught the outside edge.

England could largely thank the all-round efforts of man-of-the-match Ben Stokes, who made 70 with the bat and claimed four wickets for 39, and wicketkeeper Jos Buttler, who thrashed 71 runs and then claimed five catches.

And despite a century by Australian opener Aaron Finch the home side was

always struggling in the run chase.

Any realistic hope of an Australian win evaporated when Finch holed out to Stuart Broad at third man from the bowling of Tim Bresnan (3-45) for 108, from 111 balls.

That left Australia at 189 for five in the 36th over and there was no last-gasp miracle from James Faulkner this time.

SCORES IN BRIEF

ENGLAND: 316 for 8 in 50 overs (Cook 44, Bell 55, Stokes 70, Morgan 33, Buttler 71; Faulkner 4-67)

AUSTRALIA: 259 all out in 47.4 overs (Finch 108, Wade 23, Smith 19, Maxwell 26, Christian 23; Broad 2-56, Bresnan 3-45, Stokes 4-39)

Result: England won by 57 runs and Australia lead five-match series 3-1.
 Player-of-the-match: Ben Stokes.

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Heartbreak for Falcao

AFP, Paris



Monaco's Colombian striker Radamel Falcao requires surgery on the left knee injury he picked up in Wednesday's French Cup tie which almost certainly rules him out of the World Cup.

News of the star striker's operation was confirmed Thursday in a statement issued by his club and will have caused consternation back home in Colombia.

While the club did not specify how long they expected him to be out of action the news will raise huge concern back in Colombia who are drawn in Group C at the World Cup with Ivory Coast, Greece and Japan.

France's former national team doctor Jean-Pierre Paclet hinted at a lengthy spell on the sidelines for Colombia's key striker who has scored 20 goals in 51 international appearances.

"I don't have his file in front of me but if there's an operation it's because his ligament is ruptured, in the best case scenario it's six months (out) and his World Cup is over."

Monaco revealed their record signing had suffered "an anterior cruciate ligament strain" in the 3-0 win at amateur side

Chasseley.

It added: "Surgery is required. The doctors will do everything possible to enable Radamel Falcao to recover as quickly as possible."

In Wednesday's ill-fated game, Falcao crumbled to the ground following a challenge and needed lengthy treatment before being carried away on a stretcher just before the interval in his club's victory over Chasseley.

Chasseley disclosed they have received e-mail threats in Spanish, and Soner Ertek, the player whose tackle inadvertently caused the injury, was forced to close his Facebook page after it was targeted with intimidating messages.

Chasseley's club president Jocelyn Fontanel told AFP there had been no malice in Ertek's tackle.

"There was no aggression," he insisted.

"Accidents happen on the pitch. It wasn't violent ...

"It upset me the whole match, especially as I was beside the Monaco directors.

"Soner didn't do it on purpose, we're not a nasty team. Now there are threats on the internet. I don't know whether we should take them seriously.

"I'm very upset for Falcao."

Falcao joined Monaco for 60 million euros (£50.4m, \$82.5m) last summer from Atletico Madrid.

NZ look to wrap up series

AFP, Wellington

Fired-up New Zealand are confident they can secure a third successive victory against powerful India in Auckland on Saturday and wrap up the one-day international series with two matches to spare.

The tourists arrived in New Zealand top of the world rankings but were beaten by 24 runs in the series opener in Napier and went down by 15 runs under the Duckworth-Lewis method in Hamilton.

The back-to-back losses have cost India their top ranking -- taken by Australia -- while a win for New Zealand in Auckland would lift the hosts above the West Indies and into seventh place.

The New Zealand blueprint calls for the team to go into the final 15 overs with seven wickets in hand.